ACC TEACHERS' INNER GAME HANDBOOK

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Inner Game At Camp

POINT A TO POINT B

Long ago and far away, in a land called Sunnyvale...

It must seem like ancient history by now, those two days in April at Atari, spent absorbing as much information and wondering if you could ever assimilate it all.

Your openness, interest and enthusiasm was very much appreciated. Your honest expression of needs and problems, your response to questions and exercises helped us immensely in creating this book. The list of "Requests for Inner Game Help," in particular, was invaluable in deciding which exercises to include here.
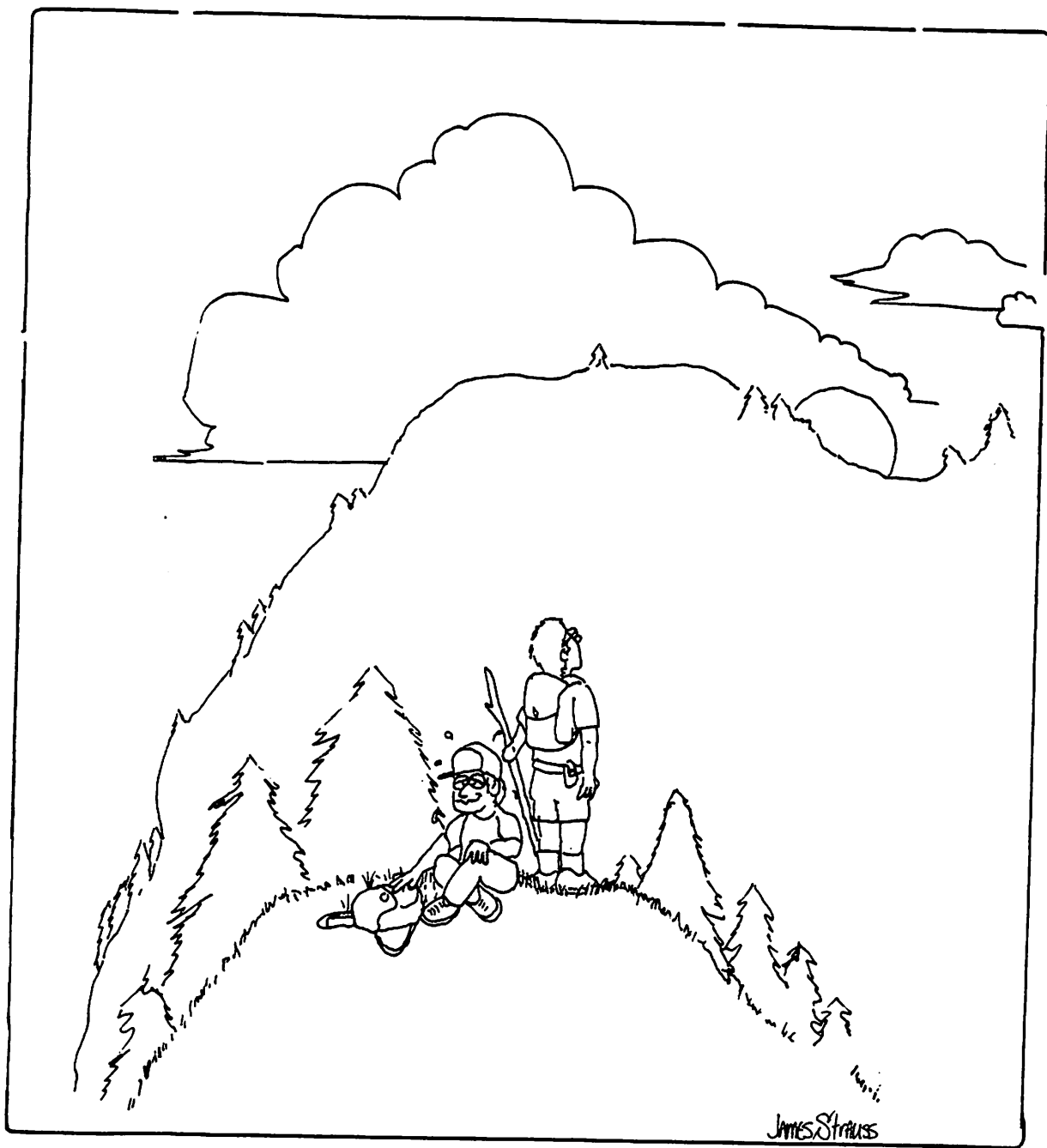
WE'VE BEEN BUSY

Since the Sunnyvale training, we've continued testing exercises and techniques with computer teachers around the country. In addition, we've continued our dialogue with kids about what they want and need as learners. And, of course, we've incorporated whatever feedback we've received from you. As a result, we feel that the final product - the book you hold in your hands - will serve as a valuable resource for you this summer.

AND WE KNOW YOU'VE BEEN BUSY

Hoping that your end of the year tasks were not so overwhelming as to prevent you from practicing the Inner Game, we now offer you the next edition... What follows is a continuation of what we've already offered. Its purpose is the same:

o To help you recognize and overcome mental
   obstacles to learning (both in yourself
   and in your students.)

o To provide ways for you to become more
   skillful in helping your students (and
   yourself) become more self-motivated and
   independent learners.

o To help you increase awareness of your
   effect on the learning process, and to
   use this awareness to enhance your
   classroom effectiveness.

We want this summer to be the best possible learning experience for everyone involved with the Atari Computer Camps. If you've been using Inner Game, we encourage you to keep on exploring it. If you haven't yet had the time or desire, no problem. In either case, you can begin now... From here...

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NOW WHAT?

The school year is over. Your pre-camp training and preparation are complete. Hopefully, you've experimented with the Inner Game exercises offered and looked through your Correspondence Course book. Now here you are at camp.

If you're anything like the average earthling, you're probably feeling a mixture of apprehension, excitement, fear, anticipation and disorientation. And that's just for starters! What in the world then, do you need to read another book for?

That's why we've kept the "reading" sections of this book short and to the point. Though there are certain concepts we want to present and some discoveries to share, mostly we want to offer you practical, simple tools to use - tools which will help you overcome your own apprehension (and your students') keep your enthusiasm high, while helping you to stay focused on your goals as well as the goals of the camp.

GETTING BY VS. LEARNING

Goal clarity is an important element of what we intend to provide. As you know, in the day-to-day reality of teaching it's sometimes easy to lose sight of much beyond "making it through to the next class."

As you also know, however, there's a possibility for something far more exciting to happen - a possibility for you and your students to take a step beyond merely learning programming procedures into the realm of real learning.

When we asked you at the Sunnyvale training what you would like help with, the most popular request was:

> "To keep perspective that we are not teaching
> programming as a body of knowledge, but as a
> way of empowering the student to do what he
> or she wants to do."

This is Atari's goal also. Inner Game's involvement in ACC has - from the very beginning - been predicated upon that goal.

METALEARNING MADE PRACTICAL

Metalearning (being empowered to learn through learning a particular thing) is what Inner Game exercises are intended to encourage and facilitate. Through increasing awareness and self-trust, and helping you and your students tap into your real goals, consciously playing the Inner Game can have a dramatic effect on learning and teaching. It can help make learning the joyful, creative, powerful process it was meant to be.

"The true teacher protects his students from depending on him. The first thing he teaches is to walk alone."

— Isaac Bashevis Singer

YOU CAN'T TELL A BOOK BY ITS COVER

The remaining chapters include the following:

o   A wide selection of exercises and techniques, divided into four categories: independent learning, mental obstacles, "juice", and learning by teaching.

o   A "troubleshooting guide": techniques and advice for pinpointing your needs/problems.

o   Methods for modifying existing exercises and creating new ones to fit your own needs and personal style.

We feel these are the most solid building blocks we can offer you for developing your own optimal approach to teaching and learning.

GETTING THE MOST

In order to get the most from what's here, we'd like
to suggest that you regard this book (and all other Inner
Game materials) as resources - not as "have-to's." Use
them when you remember to, when you want to, when you're
curious, stuck for help or even just uninspired.

Approach this handbook according to your mood. When
you're feeling adventurous, pick any exercise and experi-
ment with it. When you're feeling businesslike, look up
a particular "fix" for a particular problem. The possibi-
lities are virtually unlimited.

One other suggestion - make notes all over this book!
Really. Record any questions, ideas, reactions, innovations
or doodles as they occur to you. You may be surprised at
the effect it has on your involvement, enjoyment and
creativity.

WHAT'S INNER GAME'S TASK?

To support you. We want to see learning happen, too. And we're ready and willing to talk over any discoveries and/or difficulties, to offer coaching or take suggestions. An Inner Game staff member will probably be visiting your camp sometime during the summer, but we're also available all summer long via Confer or by phone.
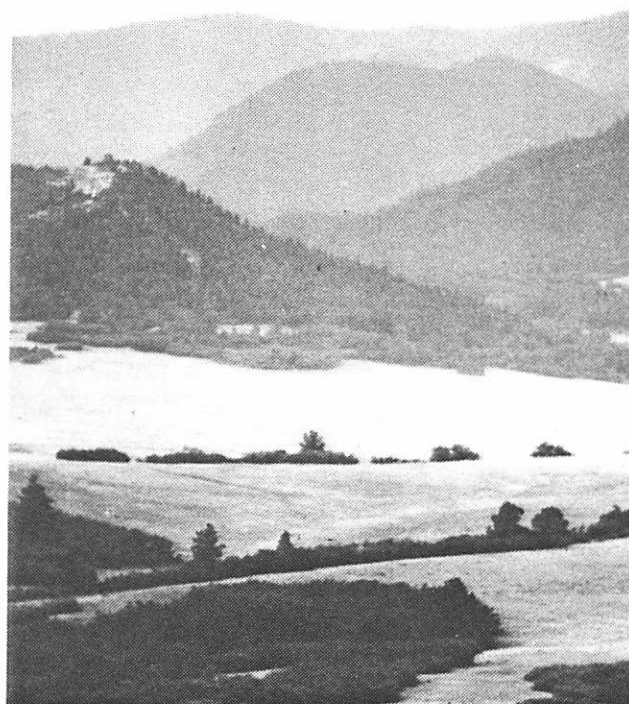
1 + 1 = 11

Not only is the Inner Game here to lend support, but so are all the other teachers, TA's and camp staff - all of whom have had their own brief introduction to the principles of the Inner Game. Given the variety of people involved, there are lots of possibilities for establishing the kind of high energy synergy that comes from daily interaction in such an enriched learning environment as you will be in this summer.

THE INPUT-OUTPUT OF INNER GAME

As in most activities, what you get out of playing the Inner Game is a direct result of what you put into it.

By experimenting with a few exercises or incorporating
some of the awareness techniques into your teaching, you
may notice a change in your perspective and responses.
The more you explore, the greater effect you'll experience,
and the more adept you'll become at helping your students
tap their learning potential.

However much you use Inner Game, we have one request -
enjoy yourself! Keep it light. Rely upon your own curiosity
and intuition to take you further on this learning adventure.

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Exercises & Techniques

"Q: What are some qualities of a good teacher?

*A: Someone who understands people, and is care-
ful not to hurt feelings or impair learning."*

-- 13 year old computer student

What follows is a selection of exercises, sug-
gestions and approaches to help you become the best
teacher (and learner) you can be -- someone who not only
doesn't impair learning, but actually helps it happen to
the fullest.

We've arranged these exercises, as in your CCB,
into four basic categories: independent learning, mental
obstacles, "juice" and learning by teaching. We recog-
nize that these categories overlap: some exercises in
each could as easily be put in one of the other three.
The important thing, however, is simply to experiment
and determine which ones work for you.

Since you've already been introduced to these
categories, we won't preface them here as we did in the
CCB. We <u>will</u> end each section with a little "philoso-
phizing," however -- suggestions for further explora-
tion and reflection.

Let your curiousity be your guide...

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

"Q: How does a teacher actually 'get in your way'?
A: When you ask how to do something and he does
it for you, instead of you getting to do it."
-- 12 year old computer student

EXERCISE #1: CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO LEARN

Purpose: To help you become a "detective" for how to
turn a common teacher-student interaction into
a learning opportunity.

When you notice yourself about to tell one of your
students to <u>do</u> something (i.e. his/her program
won't run and you're about to tell them how to
fix it, take a few seconds before speaking to:

a. Pinpoint things you notice in the situation
that enable you to propose a solution (i.e.
the program statements that are incorrect).

b. Instead of challenging your student to do
the "right" thing, how could you challenge
the student to notice things which would
let him/her see the solution independent of
your continued intervention? (i.e. you might
ask, "Can you tell me what lines 400-420 do?")

EXERCISE #2: ACCEPTING CHALLENGE

   Purpose: To help kids see challenge clearly and set
              their own challenges.

      If a student (or a whole class) seems to be re-
sisting a challenge (new task or concept, debugging pro-
blem, etc.) ask him/her how hard it is 0-10, if 0 is
"a piece of cake" and 10 is "impossible". Then ask how
hard he/she would like it to be, on the same scale.
      This simple "seeing what is" will usually help
the student feel more in control and able to proceed with
the task. If not, you can continue by:

   1.   Asking the child what he/she could do to bring
        the task to the desired rating. Or...

   2.   Asking him/her to try it for a few minutes, then
        let you know if their original "hardness" rating
        was high, low, or right on.

P.S.

      This exercise is not just a way to get kids to
do something. It helps them see the value of challenge,
and find out what they can handle. It's also a valuable
tool for you to use in finding out if a task is actu-
ally too difficult (or too easy) for a particular child's
level of competence/confidence.

EXERCISE #3:   STUDENTS TEACHING TEACHERS

Purpose: 1) To help kids become aware of how learning
           happens, 2) To help them feel empowered,
           3) To develop skills helpful in self-teaching
           and in coaching other kids.

Next time you realize that a student knows more than
you in a particular area of programming, you can use the
situation to benefit you both.

First, acknowledge to yourself that you actually _are_
less knowledgeable here than your student. Then let
him/her know, and ask if they'd like to teach _you_ for a
few minutes. Before they begin, offer to give them a
few guidelines to help you learn better. If they accept,
ask that they:

1.   First, help you find out _why_ and _how much_ you
     want to learn it.

2.   Discover what you already know about it.

3.   Find out what, if anything, you might already
     know that's similar.

As you're being taught, be sure to let the student/
teacher know if you're understanding or not. This is
extremely valuable feedback for him/her.

P.S.

Watch out for a natural tendency to want to re-main "superior" by adopting an attitude of "I'm just doing this so you'll learn something." The more you can genuinely become the learner, more powerful this exercise will be for both of you.

EXERCISE #4:   TOWARD INDEPENDENT LEARNING: A QUICKIE

Purpose: To help you stay clearly directed toward learning (rather than mere skill mastery) as a goal.

Spot check: in any student/teacher interaction, look for one learning opportunity you're not taking ad-vantage of.

P.S.

This may, at times, be a bit confronting. It's often easier and/or quicker to simply convey information rather than help someone discover it for themselves.

EXERCISE #5:   WHAT'S A LEARNER?

Purpose: To help kids become more aware of the qualities
           of a learner -- and of their own potential.

        At the beginning of a class, ask your students to
help you make a list of mental qualities that are good
for enhancing learning. Encourage their ideas, add a
few of your own (if they agree) and write them all down
on a blackboard or flipchart.
        Now, find the five or six most popular ones (by
show of hands or "applause meter"), and circle them.
Ask the students to write these circled qualities on a
sheet of paper and rate themselves (on a scale of 0-10)
how much of each quality they see in themselves.
        Finally, collect their self-ratings, explaining
that in a few days everyone will get a chance to re-rate
themselves so that comparisons can be made to the first
rating.

P.S.

        This is a good exercise to do periodically during
camp...And don't forget to include yourself!

EXERCISE #6:   IMPATIENCE -- SEEING CLEARLY

Purpose: To help kids overcome their impatience by
          seeing their learning task more clearly.

    If a child is being hindered by his/her own
impatience, ask that they briefly write down:

1. What he/she's trying to do.

2. How long it will take (estimation).

3. Whether or not they're willing to expend that
    much time/effort.

    If their answer is yes (to #3), then ask them to
let you know after they finish how long it actually took
to do it.

P.S.

    Often impatience comes from a combination of
fuzzy goals and unrealistic expectations. Sound familiar?

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EXERCISE #7:   COACHING EACH OTHER

Purpose: To heighten kids' sense of themselves as
           learners by providing guidelines for them to
           coach each other.   To increase awareness of
           how learning happens (or doesn't happen).

        If you notice kids having a hard time helping
each other successfully:

   1.   Ask the child doing the talking if he/she knows
        whether the other child understands what's being
        said.   Have both children rate the listener's
        understanding, 0-10, and then compare ratings.
        Then have both rate the talker's level of clarity/
        simplicity, and again compare ratings.

   2.   (After the fact):   Sit down with the "teacher"
        and let him/her know that you appreciate their
        efforts to help other kids.   Then offer a way
        for them to become more helpful.   Have the child
        write down three things they like least in their
        own teachers.   Then ask them to rate, 0-10, how
        much they exhibit these same qualities when tea-
        ching/coaching other kids.   Request that the next
        time they help somebody they check these qualities
        out and see how accurate their ratings are.

P.S.

     This exercise can be very powerful if you can stay neutral. By avoiding the implication that the qualities listed are "bad", you can help a student see and accept what he/she is doing. Change will then happen naturally.

EXERCISE #8: GUIDELINES FOR QUESTIONS

Purpose: To make students more aware of the question-asking process so that they begin taking more responsibility for their own education.

  Note: Two possible uses for these guidelines:

    1. As suggested questions for you to ask students in order to help them get clearer on what they need.

    2. As handouts to the students, with the introduction ("sell") that these guidelines will make them more independent and able to learn on their own.

GUIDELINES FOR ASKING QUESTIONS

1. <u>What</u> do you want to know?

2. Is there anything at all <u>you might already know</u> about the answer to your question?

3. What kind of other questions have you had that are <u>similar to this one</u>?

4. How would you find the answer <u>if your teacher wasn't here</u>?

5. If you could win $10,000 for <u>answering your own question</u>, how would you do it?

6. What <u>kind of question</u> do you have? Is it about information (vocabulary, facts, procedures, functions) or is it about something else?

7. <u>If you only had one chance to ask</u>, how would you phrase your question so your teacher understood what you wanted to know?

IDEAS, REFLECTIONS

- Consider for a moment all that a child learns in
  the first six years of life: talking, walking, eating,
  dressing, singing, dancing, and social customs --
  just to name a few. What qualities does a small child
  have that tend to get "smothered" (by teachers, par-
  ents, peers) as he/she grows older?

- What happens in the classroom that most hinders inde-
  pendent learning? Internally (inside the student)?
  Externally (includes inside the teacher!)?

- If you could change one thing about your own teaching
  that would help independent, confident learning in
  others, what would it be? (P.S. If nothing comes to
  mind, notice your teaching over the next few days and
  see what you might be doing to block learning.)

- What do you think kids feel gets in their way?

- Find one aid to real learning and pass it on (to fellow
  teachers, students, Inner Game staff...)

MENTAL OBSTACLES

> "We have met the enemy and he is us."
>
> --Pogo

The first group of exercises in this section offers methods for overcoming your own mental obstacles. The second provides techniques for helping students see and overcome theirs. (P.S. With slight adaptations, you may find that most of the exercises work for either strategy).

EXERCISE #9: STRESS MANAGEMENT: DISTANCING

Purpose: To reduce the effects of stress through non-judgemental awareness.

1. Ask yourself, "How do I know I'm stressed?" _____
   _____
   _____

2. Ask yourself, "Where in my body do I feel the greatest symptom of stress?" _____
   _____
   _____

3. Rate the degree of stress on a scale of 0-10.____

4.   As you continue your task, notice your stress
     location and rate the level every few minutes,
     noting any changes.

_____

EXERCISE #10:   STRESSORS: SEEING WHAT IS

Purpose: Reducing mental interference through non-
           judgemental awareness of the causes of stress.

       If you find yourself feeling stressed, ask your-
self the following:

1.   What is it that's bothering you? (Be as specific
     as you can):   _____

     _____

2.   How much of this thing (event, situation, etc.)
     exists on a scale of 0-10, if 0 is "none" and
     10 is "the most imaginable":   _____

3.   Now, keep noticing and rating the "stressor" over
     the next few minutes. See how accurately you
     can notice fluctuations.

4.   In what way, if any, does its effect on you change?

EXERCISE #11:   INJURIOUS VS. NON-INJURIOUS STRESS

Purpose: To increase awareness of the differences
           between injurious and non-injurious stress.

   A.   Set yourself a task in an area where you feel un-
      talented or incompetent: _____

     1.   Pick three words to describe your feelings
        about doing this task: _____

        _____

     2.   As you begin to do it (yes, really do it!),
        note any symptoms of mental or physical
        stress. Rate their effect on you on a scale
        of -5 to +5, if -5 is "paralyzing/negative",
        0 is "none", and +5 is "energizing/positive".

        _____

     3.   On a scale of 0-10, how much confidence do
        you feel about learning/performing in this
        situation? _____

   B.   Now, set a very challenging task for yourself in
      an area you know or feel comfortable in: _____

      _____. Repeat steps 1-3 above.

Afterwards, note:

   - How do the symptoms of stress differ in A and B?
   - How do the effects differ?

- What could you look for that would let you see
  the difference in your students? (i.e., to
  discriminate useful challenge from harmful stress?)

EXERCISE #12: RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Purpose: To help you optimally benefit from the "neg-
          ative" feedback you receive.

1. When receiving "negative" feedback from others
    (i.e. students, fellow teachers, spouse, etc.),
    rate the strength of your impulse to defend,
    preach, or argue with your "critic" on a scale
    of 0-10 (if 0 is no impulse to defend and 10 is
    "impossible not to respond.")

2. After rating, continue listening to the offered
    feedback and periodically rate yourself like you
    did in #1. What effect, if any, does this process
    have on you?

3. After trying #2 for a while, begin noting any one
    thing your "critic" is saying that you find par-
    ticularly interesting (or new or absurd or pro-
    found, etc.) After a few minutes of noting this,
    re-rate yourself for defensiveness, preachiness
    or argumentativeness. What changes, if any, do
    you notice in the way you respond to negative
    feedback?

EXERCISE #13: HELPING STUDENTS REFOCUS

Purpose: To provide kids with a simple way to re-focus
          attention when their minds begin to wander
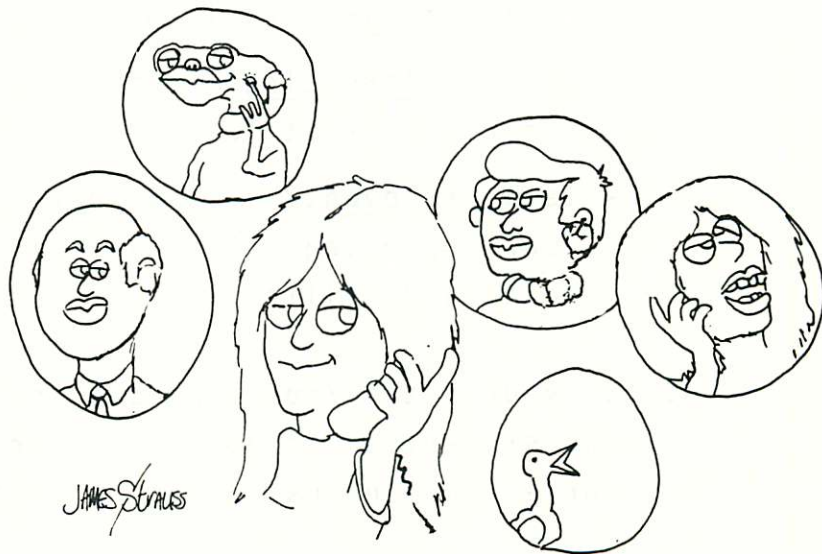   during class.

    Note: This can be xeroxed and given to kids as is,
           or shared as an informal dialogue.

1. Who is the most spaced out kid you know? _____

    _____ .

2. How can you tell this kid's spaced out? _____

    _____

3. In what class in school do you get spaced out the
    most? _____

4. Any idea why? _____

5. Do you ever get spaced out when you'd rather be
    "spaced in"? (your mind wanders away even when
    you don't want it to?) _____

6. If you'd like to begin taming your wandering mind,
    here's a few simple games you can play during a
    "boring" class. Not only can these games be fun,
    but they will give you a way to learn more when
    you want to.

a. Choose the most interesting "noticeable" thing about your teacher (i.e. their eyes, voice, walk, hair, smile, etc.) _____

_____

b. As he/she teaches, simply pay extra-special attention to this quality.

c. Even if the subject is boring to you, simply by noticing the quality you picked in #1, you will begin to gain more control over your wandering mind. Learning will then become easier and more interesting.

EXERCISE #14: ATTENTION: FINDING A FOCUS

Purpose: To offer an attention focus that will
          facilitate learning.

     Next time you notice a student (or a whole class)
being distracted by some form of mental interference,
try this:

  1. Look for some detail of the task/subject which is
      a constant (i.e.: in the game of tennis this
      detail to focus on could be the seams of the ball):

      _____

  2. Check your choice against the following:

      - Is it <u>simple</u>? (Will noticing be a burden?)

      - Is it <u>interesting</u>? (Will it hold the student(s)
        attention -- at least for a while?)

      - Is it <u>relevant</u>? (Is it part of what they're
        learning/doing, or only an interesting but un-
        related detail?)

  3. If your detail/focus passes this checklist, ask
      the student(s) to notice and/or rate the detail
      for a few minutes as they do/listen/watch.

P.S. Here's an example: Let's say you're trying to show
      a child how "fillto" works in PILOT, but he's im-
      patient to the point of interference.

You could ask him to notice where on the screen the "fillto" seems to start. Or you ask him to tell you how many times the command "fillto" appears in the program. Or what's before or after it.

The power of this technique lies in changing the "trying game" into an "awareness game." When students (or teachers) feel they have to "do it right", the result is often mental interference in the form of anxiety, self-doubt, trying too hard, giving up, etc. When asked to <u>notice</u> something, however, few people feel threatened. Consequently, the mind quiets and becomes focused in a useful direction. Natural learning then begins to happen automatically.

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<u>EXERCISE #15</u>:   PRECONCEPTIONS -- A QUICKIE

Purpose: To help kids recognize and let go of limiting
preconceptions.

Ask your students to write down all the negative impressions they have about themselves/others/computers/ camp -- anything you sense might be a problem for them.

Then, ask them to rate how much they "buy" each one. (How much, on a scale of 0-10, do they really believe it.)

Finally, let them know that they don't have to believe any of it if they don't want to. End by asking everyone to crumple or tear up their list and throw it away.

EXERCISE #16:   OVERCOMING SELF-DOUBT: SEEING WHAT IS

Purpose: To help kids recognize and overcome self-
doubt when they are challenged.

If a child or class is resisting challenge:

1. Let them know you're going to present something
challenging (new concept, programming assignment,
etc.)

2. Ask them to note their own reaction as you're
presenting it (via drawing, writing descriptive
words -- whatever they feel best expresses it.)

3. Afterwards, ask them which they think will be
worse (i.e. more uncomfortable):   their reaction,
or actually doing the thing.

4. Ask them to notice, as they do it, whether their
prediction was correct.

P.S.

This exercise is good for both fear of failure
and overconfidence.   It helps kids distinguish expecta-
tions from fact.

EXERCISE #17: OVERCOMING SELF-DOUBT: PAST SUCCESS

Purpose: To increase self-trust by acknowledging
past sucesses.

When students seem overwhelmed by the perceived
difficulty of a problem:

1. Ask them to cite three problems/difficulties
    (outside of school) they've successfully re-
    solved in the past year. (Give them possible
    examples, if necessary).

2. Get them to talk about the process they went
    through -- the discomfort, the discovery, the
    sucess. It is important here, during the time of
    their generalized pessimism, to get them to ack-
    nowledge they've "been through this before" and
    come out successful.

3. After they remember some successful past problem-
    solving episodes, ask if they can apply any of
    their successful strategies to their present di-
    lemma.

EXERCISE #18:   MENTAL OBSTACLE GUESSING GAME

Purpose: To help kids recognize and accept their men-
tal obstacles without judgement (the first
step to neutralizing these obstacles.)

If you notice kids who appear to be suffering from
a mental obstacle of come kind, try making a game out of
it, allowing them to see this obstacle without judging
themselves or feeling judged by others.

First, let your student know that you can see they're
having a difficult time.

Tell them that you're going to write down three
guesses as to what the problem is, and ask that they
write down what it really is. Then compare to see if
you guessed right.

Usually just seeing it helps reduce it. Not feeling
judged helps, too. Also, one of your "wrong guesses" may
be closer to the truth than what the child is aware of
or is willing to write down - particularly if your guesses
have to do with possible mental obstacles. This way, the
student can learn from what you've written and still
"win" the game.

P.S. If you want to take this a step further, you
can ask the child what he or she thinks might help overcome
the problem. You might be surprised at what comes out!

EXERCISE #19: OK MISTAKES (A, B, C)

Purpose: To help kids overcome their tendency to
           judge themselves when making mistakes.

   A. If a kid seems particularly afraid of making
       a mistake:
       1. Ask him/her what's the worst thing that could
           happen if the mistake was made.
       2. Ask what's the best that could happen if it
           wasn't made.
       3. Ask if he/she can live with either.

   B. If a mistake has already been made, and the child
       seems upset:
       1. Ask him/her to rate how big the mistake was.
       2. Ask how big (0-10) he/she thinks the biggest
           programming mistake you ever made was.
       3. Tell him/her the truth!

   C. If a student (or students) seems chronically upset
       by mistakes:
       1. Ask them to write down three words that describe
           how they feel when they make a mistake.
       2. Ask them to circle the one they feel most.
       3. Tell them you'd like to know how much (0-10)
           they feel it the next few times they make a
           mistake, and if they notice anything that makes
           it less.

EXERCISE #20:   OVERCOMING "FOG-OUT"

Purpose: To help overcome "fog-out" (boredom, dis-
           traction, spaciness) via increased concentration.

     If you notice your students having a hard time
concentrating, try the following:

1.   Let the student(s) know that you're going to play
     a game about concentration.

2.   Acknowledge that most of the time when we listen
     we're not "all here".

3.   Ask them to note, as you're talking, what planet
     they're on -- if "Earth" is all here, "Venus" or
     "Mars" is a little 'spaced out', and so on. (If
     they're totally "absent", they can say they're
     out of the solar system!)

4.   Continue presenting, and every few minutes, stop
     and see "where" everyone is, by a show of hands.

P.S.

     The success of this exercise depends largely upon
you. If "Earth" is implicitly "right", you may get a
lot of "correct" answers -- but not necessarily true or
useful ones. If the kids really feel the game is to
notice where they are, they'll have fun and real change
will happen automatically.

IDEAS, REFLECTIONS

- How do your mental obstacles affect your students?
  How do theirs affect you?

- Which "MO" in your students do you feel least
  equipped to deal with? (Try turning to CHAPTER IV
  and creating your own exercises to help.)

- What do you think kids would feel is their most
  bothersome MO? What's yours?

- What one thing do you find yourself doing as a
  teacher that might create or increase mental inter-
  ference in your students? (If nothing comes to
  mind, you might want to simply be aware of this
  possibility over the next few days.)

- What strategies have you developed on your own, to
  overcome your mental obstacles to teaching and
  learning?

"JUICE" ·

> "Q: *What's your biggest complaint about teachers*
> *in general?*
> A: *They teach things we will never use.*
> A: *Their not letting you make up what you want*
> *to do.*"
>
> *--jr. high computer sutdents*

The following exercises all deal with "finding
the juice" -- discovering and tapping the power of what
you and your students would really like to do. Each of
these exercises can be adapted for either you own use
or for your students' use.

EXERCISE #21: PRE-CLASS DIRECTION-FINDING

Purpose: To find your own excitement and interest
before beginning class.

  1. Write down 1-3 things you <u>want</u> to do in class
      today: _____
      _____
      _____

2. Write down 1-3 things you'd like to learn today (about yourself, students, computers, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

3. Write down 1-3 things you'd like to experience in class today (this can be as simple as you like -- "fun", "happiness", "affection for students", "sense of accomplishment", etc.):

_____

_____

_____

4. Now, after each goal above, note obstacles that might interfere with attaining it (internal or external).

5. Are any of the obstacles insurmountable? If so, cross out the goals they affect.

6. Now, don't _try_ to accomplish your goals. Just know they're there and experience your class!

P.S.

After class, you might want to review your goals and see how close you came to fulfilling them (0-10).

EXERCISE #22:   SYNCHRONIZED GOALS

Purpose: To increase student/teacher trust and enthus-
           ism by increasing awareness of each other's
           goals.

   1.   Let the class know that you're going to be playing
        a game to discover what all of you want out of
        class (or camp).

   2.   Have them divide a piece of paper into two ver-
        tical columns (and let them know that you're
        doing it, as well.)

   3.   In the left column ask them to write a list of
        things they'd like to learn, do, or feel. (You
        choose the timeframe: "this class", "today" or
        "at camp".)

   4.   In the right column ask them to list what they
        think you'd like to do, learn, experience. Re-
        quest honesty and assure anonymity.

   5.   Collect the sheets, pick the 4-6 most popular
        responses in each column, and write them on the
        blackboard.

6. Finally, record <u>your</u> responses next to theirs --
    what you thought <u>their</u> goals would be, and what
    <u>your</u> actual goals are. Leave them up for the en-
    tire period and invite comments one-to-one.

P.S.

    The more honest you are about your real goals,
the better. Don't try to look ideal. (You're both
probably in for an interesting shock to your pre-
conceptions!)

_____

EXERCISE #23:   INSTANT JUICE CHECK - A QUICKIE

Purpose: To aid in quick recognition of present "juice".

    When you feel uninspired, try this:

1. What would you <u>most</u> like to do right now, if
    you could do anything: _____

    _____

2. How would you feel (or what would you have) by
    doing that? _____

    _____

3. Is there anything you can do at this very moment
    to help you feel/have that?

EXERCISE #24:   HEIGHTENING MOTIVATION

Purpose: To heighten motivation by creating self-set
           challenges.

     If a student (or class) seems bored, uninspired,
or resistant to a new task or assignment, try this:

   1.   Let them know that you're going to show them how
        to create their own tailor-made challenge/task.

   2.   Tell them that their self-made challenge can
        have a variety of interchangeable parts, like a
        machine. Write the four parts on the board:

        DIFFICULTY (super-easy to super-hard)

        TIME FRAME (morning, afternoon, evening)

        LEARNING GROUP (alone, with on other kid, in a
                        group, with the teacher)

        PLACE   (lounge, computer room, outside)

   3.   Briefly explain the choices. Let them know that
        you're going to present a general task/challenge,
        and that each student will be allowed to "custom-
        ize" it by choosing one alternative from each of
        the four categories.

4. Offer assistance, if needed, in the customization. Then do everything possible to accommodate their requests.

5. Finally, ask them to notice whether they like their choice while they're working on it. Be sure to let them know that they'll have more chances to experiment.

P.S.

This is a very fruitful area to explore. It not only taps into real motivation and choice, but fosters both real independence in learning and increased awareness of one's own optimal learning style.

EXERCISE #25:   REAL VS. ASSUMED GOALS

Purpose: To learn to discriminate between the two.

Write down five things you feel you ought to be wanting from this summer's camp experience:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Write down five possibilities for this summer's experience that interest you:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- How do you feel about the first list? The second?

- How would you go about achieving the first five?
  The second five?

- Which do you think would be easier? More fun?

P.S.

Do you ever try to tell kids, directly or indirectly, what they "should want"?

EXERCISE #26: HOOKING UP OLD AND NEW GOALS - A QUICKIE

Purpose: To take full advantage of existing "juice".
(This can be done on your own or with a single
bored, confused or uninspired student, or with
an entire class.

What are three things/areas you're already inter-
ested in that computers will help you do or understand
better? _____

_____

_____

What are three things you'd like to know more
about (or be better at) that you think learning compu-
ting might help with?_____

_____

_____

*"Real learning takes place only in relation
to real goals."*

--John Holt

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EXERCISE #27: TIME USE (A,B)

Purpose: To increase clarity of "what is" and what's
          needed, relative to time and tasks.

   A. Feel overloaded? Quickly write down everything
       you have to do in the next 24 hours.

       - Now, rate 0-10, which tasks you're most drawn
         to.
       - Rate 0-10 which tasks are most necessary to
         accomplish.

   Experiment: Discover which order of doing is most
   satisfying (i.e.: most to least necessary, least to
   most attractive, etc.) You may also find that simply
   rating your tasks makes it easier to automatically
   drop from your list those which rate low on both scales.

   B. Don't know where the time goes? For the next
       hour, write down what you're doing every ten min-
       utes ("a freeze frame"). Then, quickly rate your
       activity, 0-10 for how much you want to be doing
       it, and 0-10 for how necessary it is.

P.S.

       Don't try to "mend your ways" and don't try not
   to! Simple awareness is a very powerful self-correcting
   tool and usually brings about automatic natural change.

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EXERCISE #28: STUDENT JUICE FEEDBACK

Purpose: To help you tap into students' existing
          enthusiasm.

1. After presenting a new concept or task, ask
    kids to anonymously rate on slips of paper
    (on a scale of 0-10) how much they're excited/
    interested in it. Guess what you think their
    response will be while they're writing. Col-
    lect the slips and average the responses.
    Post the average on the board, with your guess
    next to it.

2. Now, present again the concept or task, and
    ask your students if their "juice" is more,
    less, or the same as before.

P.S.

    This exercise provides invaluable feedback
for you. It also provides a chance for kids to get
in touch with their own juice, as well as the op-
portunity to feel that you value their response.

IDEAS, REFLECTIONS

- List five things you believe diminish kids'
  juice in class/school situations.

- List five things that diminish <u>your</u> juice.

- What do you think kids get out of the non-school
  stuff they like to do?

- If you could do <u>anything</u> you wanted to in class
  to get kids excited about learning what would it
  be? What could you realistically do that might
  produce the same results?

*"Q: What would you be like if you were a computer
    teacher?*

*A: I would ask them what they wanted to learn.
    I would always check individually if they
    understood."*

--13 year old student

"Sometimes, if you don't understand something, your teachers treat you as if you're defective or something."

--Karen, age 12

EXERCISE #30: NOT INDUCING SELF-DOUBT

Purpose: To help you recall memories of having
            been led into episodes of self-doubt
            so that your present relationships with
            students may be free of the same.

1. Can you remember a person in your life who
    doubted your potential in an area (i.e.
    sports, travel, hobbies, etc.) you were par-
    ticularly interested in? _____

2. Please list three ways in which this person's
    doubt became noticeable to you (ways you could
    tell they were doubting you):

    a._____

    b._____

    c._____

3. List some of his/her qualities that especial-
    ly turned you off:

4. Which of these qualities tend to plague <u>you</u>
    in your own role as:

    a. teacher? _____

    b. husband/wife? _____

    c. parent? _____

    d. when you're overworked? _____

    e. when you feel unloved? _____

    f. when you feel underpaid? _____

5. Pick one of these qualities you notice in
    yourself as a teacher. Rate the level of it
    0-10, periodically during a day. Notice how
    rating it affects the level.

P.S.

    Again, don't try to 'make yourself change.'
Just see what happens as you increase your awareness.

LEARNING BY TEACHING

> "Q: What's your biggest complaint about
> teachers in general?
> A: Their superior attitude. They never
> admit they're wrong.
> A: Most of them don't listen to you when
> you want to say something."
>
> —jr. high computer students

The following exercises are all for you.
Their purpose is to help you learn the most, have
the best time, and be the most effective and sen-
sitive teacher you can be.

EXERCISE #29:   THE WORST TEACHER IN THE WORLD

Purpose: To help you accept responsibility for
some of your less than optimal qualities,
and to begin letting these qualities
decrease in power by simply noticing them.

1. As a student, who was your least favorite
teacher of all time? _____

2. Describe how he/she made you feel.

3. How did their doubt affect your performance?

_____

_____

Your learning? _____

_____

Your overall experience? _____

_____

4. On a scale of 0-10, how much do you think (in your role as a computer teacher) the kinds of things listed under #2 are part of your interactions with your students? _____

5. Taking the role of your most self-doubting student, how would you recommend your teacher change his/her way of relating to you in order to decrease whatever self-doubt you might be experiencing?

P.S.

Inducing self-doubt to some extent is almost universal in student/teacher relationships. So as a mortal human being there's no need to feel guilty! Increased awareness is the best catalyst for change.

EXERCISE #31: SUPPORTING STUDENT CONFIDENCE   (A,B)

Purpose: To heighten student self-confidence through increased teacher awareness.

A. If a student seems to be having a hard time (anxious, frustrated, resistant, apathetic, etc.) ask yourself:

1. How do they feel about themselves at this moment on a 0-10 scale for the following: dumb-smart, slow-quick, or creepy-nice?

2. Pick one (perhaps the lowest of the three). As you continue to interact with the student, notice if (and how) it changes.

B. Notice the effect your "intervention threshold" has on the student's confidence level:

1. Do detailed explanations and/or answers seem to raise or lower confidence levels?

2. What effect does encouraging a child to find out something for him/herself have?

3. Is it different for different children? Different types of tasks?

EXERCISE #32:   INTEREST LEVEL

Purpose: To help you become more attuned to whether or
           not your students are "with you".

   1.   Rate a student's (or a class') level of interest
        in what you're saying at a given moment, 0-10.

   2.   Ask them how interested they are, 0-10 (explain
        that it's really OK for them to be completely
        straight, that you need this information to help
        you become a better teacher.

   3.   Repeat #1 and #2 at intervals throughout the day.

P.S.

        Notice some clues that are accurate barometers
of their interest. Notice how what you do changes the
level.

EXERCISE #33: ASKING FOR FEEDBACK

Purpose: To learn to elicit honest, useful feedback
          from students and/or other teachers.

A. When you want to ask a student or fellow teacher
    for feedback (i.e. about your presentation, the
    curriculum, their understanding/interest, etc.),
    try the following:

    1. As you ask, listen to yourself as a third
        person.

    2. Would you know what's being requested?

    3. Would you feel free to respond honestly,
        given the "vibe" of the request?

B. A variation: ask for the feedback, then ask if
    the person you're speaking to:

    1. knows what you're asking.

    2. feels free to respond honestly.

EXERCISE #34: GIVING FEEDBACK

Purpose: To help you begin to give effective feedback
          to others.

A.   When feeling a desire or need to express some-
     thing to someone (about their performance,
     attitude, etc.) pick one of the following:

     1.   Do they already know what I'm about to
          ask them?

     2.   What result do I want to produce by telling
          them what I have to say?

     3.   What effect do I think telling them will
          have on their confidence level?

B.   Ask yourself the question you've picked, an-
     swer it as best you can.

C.   Notice changes in your approach, mode of expres-
     sion, interest level/attentiveness to the one
     receiving your feedback.

P.S.

     Next time, try picking one of the other questions
and see what happens. This can be very illuminating...

EXERCISE #36: THE TEACHER CREATURE FROM THE GENDERLESS
PLANET

Purpose: To help diminish teacher stereotyping of
female students.

1. Let's say, as part of a galactic teacher exchange
program, that Atari has invited you to teach in
their computer camp as a representative from
a planet 23 light years away. Technologically,
your planet is about as evolved as the earth --
with micro-computers just beginning to be regu-
larly used in the public schools. The only dif-
ference is that on your home planet there is only
one gender -- no male and female -- only some-
thing called "bryzalak." Because there's only
one sex on your home planet, there's obviously
no such thing as male and female stereotypes.

2. Given this background, how do you think your
classroom relationship to your male and female
students might change during your brief stay
here on earth?

3. Just for fun, try pretending today you <u>really are</u> <u>from the genderless planet</u>. You have absolutely no idea that girls are supposed to be more "math-phobic" than boys. You have no projections of which of the sexes will most likely end up as computer programmers. You even have no idea who is most likely to wear ribbons in their hair. At the end of the day please consider the following:

a. Did you notice anything different about your teaching style?

b. Did you notice anything different about your students' responses?

c. Which, if any, habitual stereotyping mechanisms became most obvious to you?

EXERCISE #36: SPONTANEITY VS. STRUCTURE: I & II

Purpose: To help you discover your most effective
          balance between structure and spontaneity in
          a classroom setting.

Note: We included the first part of this exercise
       in your CCC -- we felt it was useful enough
       to "rerun" and elaborate upon.

1. Take a minute or two to do the following exercise
    at various intervals throughout a day's teaching.

    a. If on a scale of 0-10 (0 being complete spon-
        taneity -- everyone, you included, simply
        "winging it" -- and 10 is complete structure
        -- all students sitting in specified seats
        while you deliver a prepared lesson) how
        would you rate what's happening in your class-
        room right now? _____

    b. As you do this periodically throughout the
        day, notice:

        1. What range from 0-10 do students in a
            group seem to enjoy the most? _____

        2. What range do you enjoy the most? _____

        3. In what range are students generally discov-
            ering or understanding the most? _____

        4. In what range do they seem the least com-
            fortable? _____

5. When do you feel the least comfortable? ____

After you begin to become comfortable using the rating system in the first part of this exercise, try the following:

1. Aiming for the goal of maximum comfort and learning for you and your students, begin to experiment with various levels of structure and spontaneity.

2. What effect does alternating high structure with high spontaneity have?

3. Which of your teaching tasks are best accomplished in a high spontaneity environment?

    A highly structured environment?

4. Again, experiment. You may be surprised...

A Useful Variation:

Use the same rating and noticing technique, but focus on individuals instead (especially those who prove the most "difficult"). How do their comfort and discomfort zones compare with those of the group?

"Q: How do teachers 'get in your way'?

A: When they make things too complicated.

A: When you ask a simple question and they give a long explanation."

            --jr. high computer students

EXERCISE #37: ABSTRACT CONCEPTS MADE CONCRETE

Purpose: To help you simplify and concretize explanation of abstracts. To increase your awareness of student understanding.

Next time you have to explain an abstract computing concept to a student or class (i.e. randomness, looping, variables, etc.) try this:

1. Think of some physical phenomenon as a metaphor or analogy for the concept (i.e. Variables = wild cards. Looping = scratched record or repeats in music):

      _____

      _____

2. Using your concrete analogy, explain the concept. As you're talking, notice how simple/complex your explanation seems to you (0 = most simple, 10 = most complex).

3. After you finish, ask the kids how much they un-
    derstood (0-10) and how simple it seemed to them
    (0-10).

4. If ratings don't satisfy you, try again.

P.S.

A fun and useful variation of this is to ask
the kids to act out your analogy or, if so inspired,
to act out their own analogy. For example, if random-
ness was the concept, you might ask two or three kids
who understand it to figure out how to demonstrate it
physically. (You can help, if they need it -- but they
might have a much simpler, more effective way of demon-
strating it than you can imagine.)

Last summer some kids at the San Diego camp dem-
onstrated various degrees of randomness by moving at
random within various physical boundaries (first, the
whole room, then smaller, defined areas, then two dif-
ferent areas.) The class loved it and it proved easy
to understand and "translate".

===

EXERCISE #38: THE EYES OF A CHILD: A QUICKIE

Purpose: Becoming a learner, staying fresh.

For the next half-hour, forget that you've ever been a teacher. You're a fourteen-year-old kid who's been given the temporary responsibility of helping out the other kids as best you can while the teacher's gone.

1. Does your new identity affect your stress level? Enjoyment level?

2. What, if anything, changes in your interactions with the "other" students?

3. What, if anything, changes in your own attitudes about mistakes (your own and others')? Fun? Learning? Control?

===

"Education consists mainly in what we have unlearned."

--Mark Twain

IDEAS, REFLECTIONS

- What one thing do you think could be improved in your teaching through increased awareness? (If nothing comes to mind, look for possible "foggy" areas in your teaching over the next few days.)

- Remember what you were like as a novice teacher. Do you feel you were more or less sensitive to your students' state of mind? More or less open to learning new things?

- What's a good teacher? How do you suppose your students would answer that question?

- What does it feel like to discover a new way of teaching something -- both pleasant and unpleasant feelings?

- What would you most like to be able to do better as a teacher? (You might want to turn to Chapter III and see if your wish is covered in the exercise index.)

*"We shall not cease from exploring
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time."*
--T.S. Eliot

3

Troubleshooting

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"There is always a wellknown solution to every human problem - neat, plausible and wrong."

— H.L. Mencken

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Now that we've offered you a fairly wide selection of Inner Game exercises and techniques, we are including a chapter that will help you get the most possible benefit from them. It includes:

o Methods for pinpointing problem areas as clearly as possible, (to help make it easier for you to respond appropriately).

o An index of exercises to problems, (to guide you to "the right tool for the job" in dealing with common difficulties).

o Information on offering these Inner Game techniques for your students' use, (to help in determining when that's appropriate and how best to do it).

IF I KNEW WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS...

It might not be a problem. How often have you heard or said something like that? Most of us recognize intuitively that just seeing something clearly can be half the battle.

When you're right in the middle of a situation, it's easy to lose perspective or get overly judgemental. You know something's "off", but you can't quite pinpoint it. The five techniques which follow are all intended to help you gain clarity and objectivity on the "trouble spots"
-- that may arise in your teaching and learning this summer.

> "If man makes it through the present
> stage of the universe, it will be
> because he has discovered himself."
>
> -Buckminster Fuller

EXERCISE A - FOCUSING IN

a) Sit quietly and close your eyes (if feasible). Ask yourself gently, "What's the matter?"

b) Propose possible answers to yourself, either mentally or out loud. Notice how you feel physically as you think or say each one.

c) When an answer "feels right" in your body (you may notice a feeling of relaxation, release, increased comfort, deeper breathing, decreased restlessness, etc.) explore it a little more. Propose expansions or variations of that answer, noticing what feels more or less "right."

d) When you feel you're on the "bullseye", write down your answer as clearly as you can.

EXERCISE B - POSSIBILITIES

a) Sit down with a piece of blank paper and a pencil. Write across the top of the page: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

b) Now without thinking too much about it, begin to list possible answers. Don't try to be right -- in fact, throw in a few "crazy" ones for good measure ("My Aunt Edna gave me another shoehorn for Christmas", "Robots are stealing my luggage," etc.)

c) After listing at least ten possibilities, rate each one 0-10, if 0 is "definitely not it" and 10 is "bingo!"

d) Circle any that scored 8 or more. Now, turn the page over and again list the circled answers, this time without their ratings.

e) Look at them for a few moments and then rerate them, using the same scale as before. If any still score 8-10, go for 'em.

EXERCISE C - HOW DO YOU KNOW?

(This exercise is useful when you think the problem may be connected to some kind of mental interference in you.)

a) Sit quietly and close your eyes (if feasible). Ask yourself <u>how you know</u> there's a problem. Write down your response, worded like this:

"Because I feel _____"

b) What behavior/event/situation triggers this feeling in you the most?

_____

c) If you know immediately, fine. You might want to turn to the index for help in dealing with it.

d) If you don't know, try this: next time you're in class, note the level of this feeling in yourself -- when it rises significantly, look to see what's going on around you.

EXERCISE D - QUICK CHECK

(This one is especially good for on-the-spot troubleshooting.)

a) When something in the classroom feels "off", but you don't know what it is, ask yourself "If I could change any one thing in this situation right now, what would it be?"

Your answer will probably give you at least a general idea of where the main problem is.

EXERCISE E - WRITE OFF

a) Sit down with a piece of paper and pencil. Begin writing at the top of the page, as though beginning a story: "One week later, the problem was gone."... Now, continue the story, explaining what changed to resolve the problem.

b) After you've written it, reread it. As you read your own version of the problem's solution, it will become clearer to you what the problem is.

ON-THE-SPOT AND AFTER-THE-FACT

These exercises can be used in two ways. During class, they provide techniques for gaining insight into present difficulties and/or needs. (Exercises A and C are particularly useful for this, since no writing is involved.) After class, they provide ways for you to learn from previous events and deal more effectively with similar situations in the future.

Once you've used an exercise to get clear on the problem, you may immediately see a solution. If not, you can refer to the index that follows for ideas.

A WRENCH? A HAMMER? A SKY HOOK?

Now to find the right tool for the job.

We've made up a list of problems, based both on what you communicated to us at Sunnyvale and on what we've heard from you since then. Each problem is matched with the exercise or exercises from Chapter II that we felt would be most helpful.

You might want to use this index to find help in dealing with chronic problems -- ones you've encountered over and over again during your years of teaching. Or you might use it to find solutions for acute problems -- those you've pinpointed using the preceding exercises, or that you've encountered in the unique situations of this summer's camp.

In either case, we hope you find it a valuable guide to utilizing your Inner Game exercises.

INDEX (with exercise numbers)

_____

ONE FOR ME AND ONE FOR YOU

You may find yourself feeling that many of the ex-
ercises created for you would be great for your students,
too. You're probably right. Here are some guidelines
for offering Inner Game exercises to students:

1) <u>Check your motivation</u>. Are you encouraging a
    child to do an exercise because you think it will
    help his/her learning, or because <u>you</u> want the
    child's behavior to change? Kids, as you've prob-
    ably noticed, are remarkably sensitive to coercion
    and tend to resist it, either consciously or sub-
    consciously.

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2) <u>Focus on the student's response</u>. Is the child gen-
   uinely interested in what you're offering, or merely
   tolerating it? These exercises aren't something
   you can force someone to do.

3) <u>GETTING to versus HAVING to</u>. This is an extension
   of guideline #2. Listen to your communication.
   Are you presenting Inner Game as a possibility, an
   experiment, or as a requirement (implicitly or
   explicitly)?

4) <u>Speak from your own experience</u>. Notice the differ-
   ence in response when you offer kids exercises
   you've tried and found useful, as opposed to those
   you've merely read through. Personal experience
   is a powerful communicator and motivator. Kids
   can feel it when you're excited about a discovery,
   too.

AND SO...

The troubleshooting portion of your handbook draws
to a close. We feel that what we've presented here can
play an important part in making Inner Game a practical
and integral part of your teaching and learning this
summer.

We further suspect that it might help bring you
to the point of feeling a need for what the following
chapter is designed to address...

4

The Next Step

"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."

> --John Wooden, UCLA

AND THAT'S EXACTLY...

What this chapter is all about. We've given you a wide selection of teacher-tested Inner Game exercises. We've offered some techniques and guidance for getting the most out of them. Now what?

Here's where you take charge. Consider this as a kind of Bon voyage party into the high seas of your own exploration.

First we'll talk a bit about experimenting with what you've already been given. Then we'll offer some techniques and insights to help you create your own Inner Game exercises. Finally, we'll talk about "self-generation" -- where consciously playing the Inner Game becomes an increasingly natural, integral part of your life. (And where, oddly enough, you may start to see that you've been playing it all along...perhaps just not winning.)

COME INTO MY LABORATORY

Two things make experimenting with Inner Game exercises fun and easy. To begin with, there aren't any rights or wrongs -- only what works for you and what doesn't. Secondly, you can't blow anything up.

Seriously, folks -- the worst thing that could happen is a bit (or byte?) of momentary confusion or embarrassment. Perhaps reviewing a brief summary of the basic Inner Game principles will be useful here:

1) The _will_ of the learner is the fuel of learning.

2) _Trust_ in innate ability is essential to stepping beyond present knowledge.

3) _Awareness_ (or attentiveness) is the medium of learning.

4) The main obstacle to learning of any kind is the _mental interference_ created by self-doubt.

These four understandings are the foundation of the Inner Game. The goal of any Inner Game exercise is to overcome mental interference (4) -- and thereby free learning potential -- (by developing awareness, trust, or will -- #1, #2, or #3.)

As you use Inner Game techniques, you'll begin to see how each exercise works in one of these three areas:

AWARENESS: The skill of focusing attention on the events of the moment, without judging them good or bad.

TRUST: The skill of seeing and relying on the natural wisdom and ability within you.

WILL: The skill of discovering, clarifying and utilizing one's real goals.

As you begin to experiment with an Inner Game exercise, check to see which skill is being developed. Knowing this will give you a clearer idea of how you might modify it to make it more effective.

The best and simplest check, however, for how useful an exercise is:

DOES IT FEEL GOOD AND DOES IT WORK?

Some things work but feel terrible, while others are lots of fun and completely ineffective. If an exercise gives you both, you're on the right track!

CREATIVITY

> *"What have I done?"*
>
> --Dr. Frankenstein

The most important thing in creating something new is that you not take yourself too seriously. Self-judgement is lethal in new territory.

Fortunately, you're in a much less high-risk situation than poor Dr. Frankenstein. The worst that can happen here is that something simply won't do what you thought it would...and you'll get a clear sense of what not to try next time.

To provide parameters for your creative endeavors, we've put together a basic guide for making an awareness exercise. Of the three skill areas (awareness, will and trust), by far the majority of Inner Game exercises focus on increasing and directing awareness.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You've probably already experienced it somewhat, but Inner Game awareness exercises work something like this: by focusing your attention on some part of the learning task, the mind automatically quiets. Mental "noise" subsides and the learner consequently becomes more receptive. Learning, enjoyment and performance naturally increase.
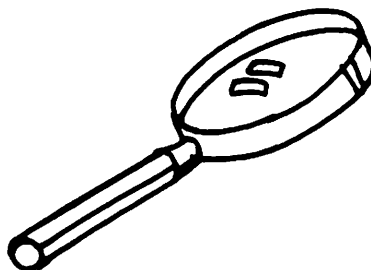
So, how to find an appropriate awareness focus? We've found that an effective focus point has three qualities:

o It's simple
o It's interesting
o It's relevant to the task at hand

Here's an example of a simple, interesting and relevant point we direct our attention to daily: noticing the temperature of the water falling on our hand before we enter the shower. We direct our attention, then learn from and act on our experience.

There are a great many examples of this natural "awareness feedback loop" in our daily lives. Mostly, though, they happen in areas where we don't doubt our competence: driving, walking, doing household chores, etc.

In areas such as learning computers (where we tend to doubt and judge ourselves) it's extremely helpful to be able to consciously create appropriate awareness focuses.

THE PROCESS

The first step in creating an awareness exercise is knowing what you want to use it for. As clearly as you can, write down the problem/need you'd like to affect with your exercise:

Now restate it in terms of what result you'd like to see. (For example, if the problem was: "Johnny's inability to deal with "bugs", a "result" restatement might be "for Johnny to be able to "debug" his programs."):

Imagine that the goal has been fulfilled. Now, look to see what behavior has changed in the imagined situation. (It might be "Johnny's not frustrated" or "Johnny's not giving up so easily."):

Instead of trying to change that behavior (the classic and all too often unsuccessful response), notice where you could focus your attention in that behavior (perhaps "how high is his frustration level at any given moment" or "how close is he to giving up right now"):

By focusing your attention non-judgementally, you'll
see the situation more clearly and respond more naturally,
appropriately and effectively.

AND FOR THE STUDENT

To take it a step further: it's almost always use-
ful for the student to become aware of the same thing
you're becoming aware of. For example, in the case of
Johnny and the bugs: "Johnny, on a scale of 0-10 how
frustrated do you feel right now? Hmm, well, how about
looking through the program again and letting me know when
it gets above an 8."

Keep exploring, using awareness as the probe ("A 9?
What's happening right there that bugs you?")

As you become more adept, you'll see how powerful
directing your own and the students' awareness can be.
It's the most effective means for helping someone learn
from his or her own experience.

If an awareness focus you've created isn't working,
ask yourself three questions to help in modifying it:

Is it simple? (Is the focus more of a hassle
than the problem?)

Is it interesting? (Am I interested in looking
at it -- will it hold my attention?)

Is it relevant? (Is it part of the situation...
or is it something interesting, but unrelated?

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SEEING VS. DOING

It's essential that these focuses be communicated as <u>awareness</u> challenges and not <u>performance</u> challenges. For instance:

"Johnny, how high is your frustration level?" is an <u>awareness</u> challenge: it asks the child to <u>notice</u> something.

"Johnny, can you try being a little less frus- trated?" is a <u>performance</u> challenge. It asks him to <u>do</u> something.
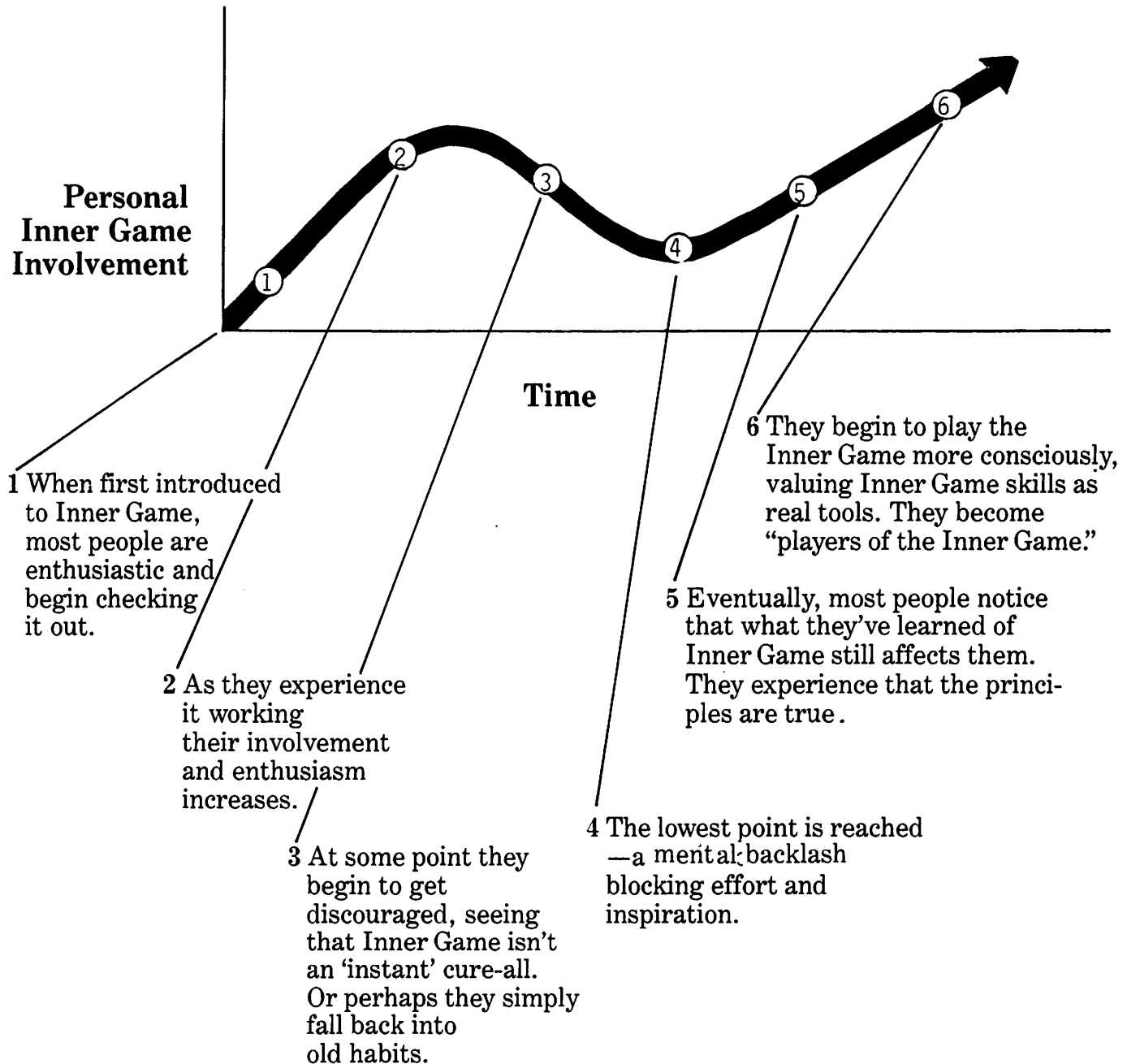
"Do" instructions amplify existing self-doubt and do not create an experiential feedback loop. They're appropriate only when there's little or no self-doubt.

AND BEYOND

As you explore further, you'll probably encounter two more "Inner Game phenomena." The first, which we've dubbed "the Inner Game Curve", goes something like this

THE INNER GAME CURVE

Personal Inner Game Involvement

Time

1 When first introduced to Inner Game, most people are enthusiastic and begin checking it out.

2 As they experience it working their involvement and enthusiasm increases.

3 At some point they begin to get discouraged, seeing that Inner Game isn't an 'instant' cure-all. Or perhaps they simply fall back into old habits.

4 The lowest point is reached —a mental backlash blocking effort and inspiration.

5 Eventually, most people notice that what they've learned of Inner Game still affects them. They experience that the principles are true.

6 They begin to play the Inner Game more consciously, valuing Inner Game skills as real tools. They become "players of the Inner Game."

PLAYING THE GAME

The second phenomenon is the last step of the Inner Game curve -- becoming a "player of the Inner Game."

You'll know it's happening when you start automatically looking for a place to focus your attention in difficult situations; when you naturally look to find your "juice" or goals if you're feeling foggy or uninspired; when you immediately make up mental scenarios to help yourself "let go" if you're not trusting your potential (or a student's).

The reason it feels so natural is that we're all "players of the Inner Game". We all have strategies for overcoming our mental obstacles. It's just that we usually don't play very consciously. Or very well.

The ultimate aim of all that we've offered you here? Simply, for you to reach a point where you play the Inner Game more and more consciously -- and win.

"There are things that are known and things
that are unknown; in between are doors."

--Anonymous

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Last Words

LAST WORDS

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the
unquestionable ability of people to elevate
their life by a conscious endeavor."
- Henry David Thoreau

"The last of man's freedom is his ability to
choose his attitude in a given set of circumstances."
-Victor Frankl

And that, in a nutshell, is what we hope will happen
this summer.

As you already know, computers are - or can be -
wonderful tools for learning. They're non-judgmental and
infinitely patient. They invite clear thinking, creativity,
originality, experimentation and independence. It is the
teacher that determines, to a large extent, whether the
computer's potential as a learning tool is realized.

We've presented you with the best we have to offer - tools which can enable you to:

o Stay focused on your <u>real</u> learning goals, and help students discover and focus on theirs.

o Recognize and neutralize the effects of mental interference in yourself and others.

o Build real self-trust and non-judgement in students.

AND THE END RESULT?

Ultimately, we hope that each student and teacher consistently experiences the state of mind most conducive to learning. We hope that everyone participating in the Atari Computer Camps becomes confident, eager and adept learners - regardless of environment. And finally, it is our goal that everyone enjoys the process, experiencing the joy of finding out what real learning is.

"To really _learn_ something, to feel it and
know it and understand it in your bones,
is ecstasy of the purest sort."

                              - George Leonard

                    Bon Voyage!

P.S. We're only a modem away....